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ABSTRACT

Recruitment of Native Americans to be foster or adoptive parents for Native American children involves careful planning, preparation, and work. In addition to making standard administrative decisions and maintaining required records, social workers must be sensitive to the attitudes, lifestyle, and culture of Native Americans recruited as adoptive or foster parents. Social workers can further recruitment in many ways, including distributing materials at Indian Center board meetings and pow wows, making and distributing posters of children, discussing needs on radio and television and in tribal newspapers, attending tribal meetings, distributing fact sheets on their programs, and visiting local agencies and public health offices to talk with staff and parents. Once parents have been recruited, social workers must respond quickly and sensitively. Statewide identification of Indian parents, computer data bank information on available children and parents, and photolisting of available families can facilitate adoption of Native American children by Native American parents. Included are a list of five resources to contact regarding Native American adoption and foster care, a sample recruitment form, recommendations regarding permanency planning, and a 40-item bibliography of books, articles, tapes, and cassettes available on loan from the Region VIII Child Welfare Training Center in Denver, Colorado. (SB)

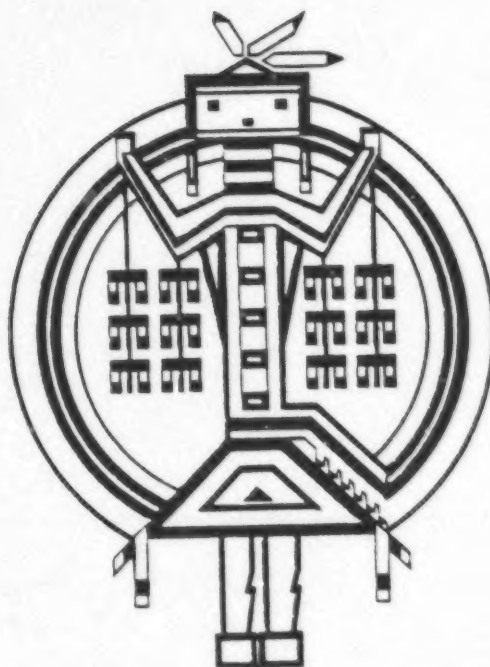
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RECRUITMENT OF NATIVE AMERICAN PARENTS

Ideas for Practice



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RECRUITMENT OF NATIVE AMERICAN PARENTS

A. Planning and preparation

1. Identification and description of Native children in care
2. What tribe, what clan name
3. Average length of stay
4. Reunification efforts
5. Relative availability
6. Describe child's lifestyle and major significant relationships
7. Child's identity with tribalness
8. What will be needed for child to make a smooth, planned re-entry into tribe of family or other tribe of new family or other non-relative family

B. Make an administrative decision as to:

1. General recruitment of families
2. Child specific recruitment

C. Identification and recruitment and support of Native parents in your community.

There are numerous Indian people in each community. The resources are available for you to work with and for. The attitude you have as a worker can and will determine the success of your efforts in locating the parents. Native parents will need means of access to the "traditional" agencies. Of course, it is helpful to have, when possible, a staff person who is of the same tribe and can speak the language and know the lifestyle. As in any new area, parents should have education about the special circumstances of the particular child in care to make a wise and planned decision. These supports must be available to enhance the success of the forming of the relationship after placement. There are cultural-ethnic myths about handicaps which will need identification and sensitive discussion with the worker and family.

D. Recruitment ideas:

1. Listing of Indian agencies and associations
2. Lisiting of Boards of Directors
3. Listing of Indian families in schools
4. Contact local Indian churches
5. Contact Indian legislators, BIA, IHS, etc.
6. Contact local Indian Center and request listing, of adult education, headstart, employment programs, for list of parents and contacts.
7. Attend Indian Center Board meeting and give materials to members
8. Attend Pow Wows and set up booth to give out information
9. Make posters of children and distribute
10. Request T.V. time and discuss needs
11. Attend tribal meetings weekly and get word to persons
12. Request time on minority radio program
13. Develop a fact sheet on your program with your needs and how to contact you.
14. Contact Navajo Times or other tribal newspapers and write a weekly column on a particular child
15. Put posters in local post office, Seven/Eleven, FedMart, DNA, tribal-urban buildings
16. Put an ad for program in the weekly free paper distributed to homes and apartments
17. Give the information to tribal persons, (judges, chairman, etc.) and ask them to get names of potential families
18. Sit at the local public health waiting room and talk to parents who have children, give information to nurses, aides, clerical staff
19. Listen to grapevine
20. Go to the local agencies who work with special children with DD problems and ask them to give materials to their Native clients who may be interested
21. Go to the public welfare office and give information to their Native foster parents and talk at their foster care meeting.

22. Everywhere you go, have materials on the needs of children and how parents can contact you, readily available to give out to parents
23. No time frame: all day, all weekend!! Your energy and warm personality will bring families to you.

E. Retention

Immediate, friendly response is critical! Outreach to the public must be complimented by thoughtful response by your staff. Family studies must be done with sensitive planning to lessen red tape and cost. These are administrative decisions which need pre-planning before the outreach so the families won't be "turned off" by poor agency response. Develop a parents' group so they can support and educate each other. Provide transportation, warm frybread, and a friendly, kind spirit and your families will be there.

E. Bridges to Adoption by Native parents of Native children

1. Statewide identification of Indian parents (coordination with local tribal groups)
2. Indian staff at all levels
3. Networking and planning between all ICW grantees
4. Computer data bank information on available Indian children and families
5. Photolisting of Indian families available
6. Re-writing of adoption requirements to meet needs of families and children in minority community

F. National conference on recruitment

1. Coordination of efforts between tribes, counties, and states to improve services for special needs Native children and potential adoptive parents.

PERSONS/RESOURCES TO CONTACT

1. Ann McCann, Adoption Specialist
Native American Adoption Resource Exchange
"Council Kids"
Council of Three Rivers American Indian Center
200 Charles Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15238
(412) 872-4457
2. Heidi Illanes
New Mexico Social Services
Box 2348
Santa Fe, NM 87503
(505) 827-4110
3. Minority Adoption Exchange
Carol Williams
Region IX Consolidated Resource Center for Children
and Youth Services
California State University
5151 State University Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90032
(213) 224-3283
4. Lois Tuchler
Jewish Family and Children's Services
2033 N. 7th St.
Phoenix, AZ 85020
(602) 257-1904
5. National Adoption Exchange
Adoption Center of the Delaware Valley
1218 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107
(215) 925-0200
Toni Oliver, Associate Director

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SEATTLE INDIAN TASK FORCE RECOMMENDS SOME CAUTION
REGARDING PERMANENCY PLANNING

1. Involve the extended family and/or tribe/clan as they have long term commitment to the child.
2. There may be one to three persons around child who has significant, meaningful attachment to child and his future.
3. Mobility of the child within the extended family is normal, culturally appropriate behavior and not seen as instability.
4. Guardianship may be viable option for child and parent.
5. The concept of the "intent" of permanency planning puts focus of workers to legalize and terminate. Tribal legal system may not have same goals.
6. Time limitations and expectations of permanency planning must be flexible to meet specific needs of Indian family cultural dynamics. (Urban-rural relocation and problems ensued.)
7. Terminology and language of permanency planning may need to be re-defined within cultural perspective and local needs of families impacted.
8. Value clarification and attitude may cause barriers which need attention prior to planning with tribes and states.

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Xeroxed Copies

"Explanation of the Provisions of the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978"

"Public Law 95-608 - Nov. 8, 1978"

"Summary of the Act"

"Tasks and Strategies for Implementation"

(these are from a publication by the American Indian Lawyer Training program entitled: Suggested Strategies for Successful Implementation of the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, Oakland, CA.: September, 1979. We do not have the book in the library.)

Audio Cassettes

"Child Welfare Resource Development in the Indian Community - tribal, private and public agencies' collaboration is making a difference"

Presented at Creative Challenges in Child Welfare Workshop at Denver, Colorado, by Betty Keegan, October 1981.

2 tapes

Indian Child Welfare Act Foster Care Seminar

includes: AFDC-FC/funding; funding resolutions; child abuse standards; child abuse and neglect.

Seminar presented June, 1980.

5 tapes

Indian Child Welfare Act Seminar

includes: intervention-consent; roles in I.C.W.; family services; common family problems; mock hearings; critiques.

Seminar presented 1978.

4 tapes

Indian Child Welfare Legislation Conference

includes: tribal courts' role and responsibility; tribal contact agency role and responsibility; social worker's role; overview and summary of ICWA; legislation; summary of problems within legislation.

Presentors: Don Sosa, Chief Justice, New Mexico Supreme Court; Eric Eberhard; Nancy Evans; Merwin Lynch.

Conference held at Albuquerque, June, 1980.

3 tapes

"Native Americans"

Office of Educational Services, University of Colorado Medical Center

1 tape

Self-Concept and the American Indian Foster Child Study Unit

"Growing Up Indian - One Girl's Experience" and

"Tribal Chant"

2 tapes (with printed instructor's guide)

"The Social Network in Rural Communities; Knowing the System and How to Use it"

includes: American Indians; legislation; cultural factors.
1 tape

Audio Visual

"Existing Child Protection Services on Reservations"

3 - 3/4"

filmed at a conference in Aberdeen, South Dakota
1980

"Indian Child Welfare Act"

9 reel-to-reel audio tapes

American Indian Lawyer Training Program

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